

Small Boat Planer Boards for the Chesapeake

All Planer Boards are not Equal

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Anglers with small boats have not been able to compete with larger vessels pulling **PLANER BOARDS**. Things Have Changed.

Over the last several years Planer boards have emerged as one of the foremost components for catching fish in the Chesapeake Bay. When used properly, they have many advantages. Most anglers perceive them to be cumbersome and only workable on larger boats. This theory is no longer true.

Rigging Planer Boards.

Setup properly, Planer Boards are can easy to use and very effective, especially for Trophy Stripers that enter the Bay during the spring migration.

The design of Boards can vary.

Boards are designed to run as close to parallel to the boat when trolling. In the Bay our trolling speed is generally 2 -3 knots. The further back behind the boat, the less effective they are. The higher the speed the more pull they will have.

Size of the board makes a big difference. 2 board or 3 board models, 6 “ , 10” 12” Board depth all cause the boards to run deeper in the water, causing more resistance that maintains the tension on the Board retainer liner.

Attaching to Boat

Boards should be to the boat at the highest point. Boats with T-Tops or hard tops have an advantage. The Board line will have a bow and may drag the water when out any distance. .



Without a t-top there are planer board poles that serve to raise the level of the board attachment



Generally you want the boards to run safely at 75 to 125 feet from the boat and be able to troll 2 to 4 lines.

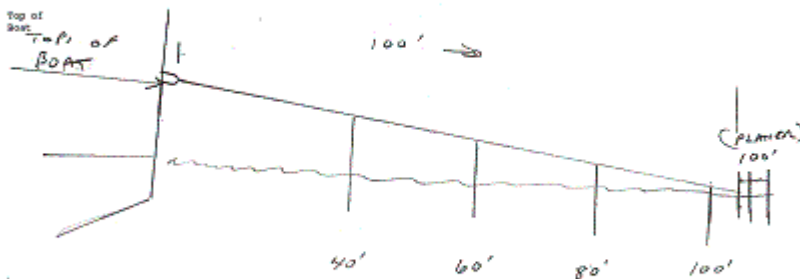
Trolling with Boards

Boards are used to target fish that are in the top 25 ft of the water column. They are not designed for running deep lines. Generally trolling in the Bay consists of using Umbrella rigs with Parachutes. Bucktail rigs and double rigged rubber lures, Tsunami's, Storms etc. These all work well with Boards and should not require any weight.

Spoons can be used on Boards, but due to spoon design, tangles may occur if mixed with other lures..

When attached to the Boards, my trolling rigs are about 20 feet apart and start at about 40-50 feet from the boat.

Always work your lines from the outside in. The rods farthest out go in your top position in the rod holders.



GETTING STARTED

ALL PLANER BOARDS are not created equal.

Recently I tested and compared several popular models particularly designed for ease of use and small boats. All were effective and had their unique advantages and disadvantages.



Recently took the time to try and compare several planer boards sold or made in the Chesapeake area.

With the popularity of Planer Boards now being used for trolling in the Chesapeake I thought I would try several models and see the differences.

I tested & used three types

- 1) Production 6 inch 2 board set from Riviera
- 2) 6 inch custom 3 board set
- 3) 10 inch 3 board custom set I made from a model we have used for 5 years

I tested all models trolling at 2.5 – 3 knots in a slight chop.

Production Model from Riviera:



These boards retail around \$60- \$70 each.

They are very light and made with plastic over foam. 2 Board model

They are made to fold up for storage – a plus



Setting out in a light chop these boards started to show instability and why these would have a problem in heavy chop

At 100ft – the boards run way back without anything rigged to the line

Started rigging with 1 umbrella and boards started pulling back further



With 1 umbrella @ 100feet, the boards start to pitch and pull and were close to flipping.





It is good that they fold and stow away .

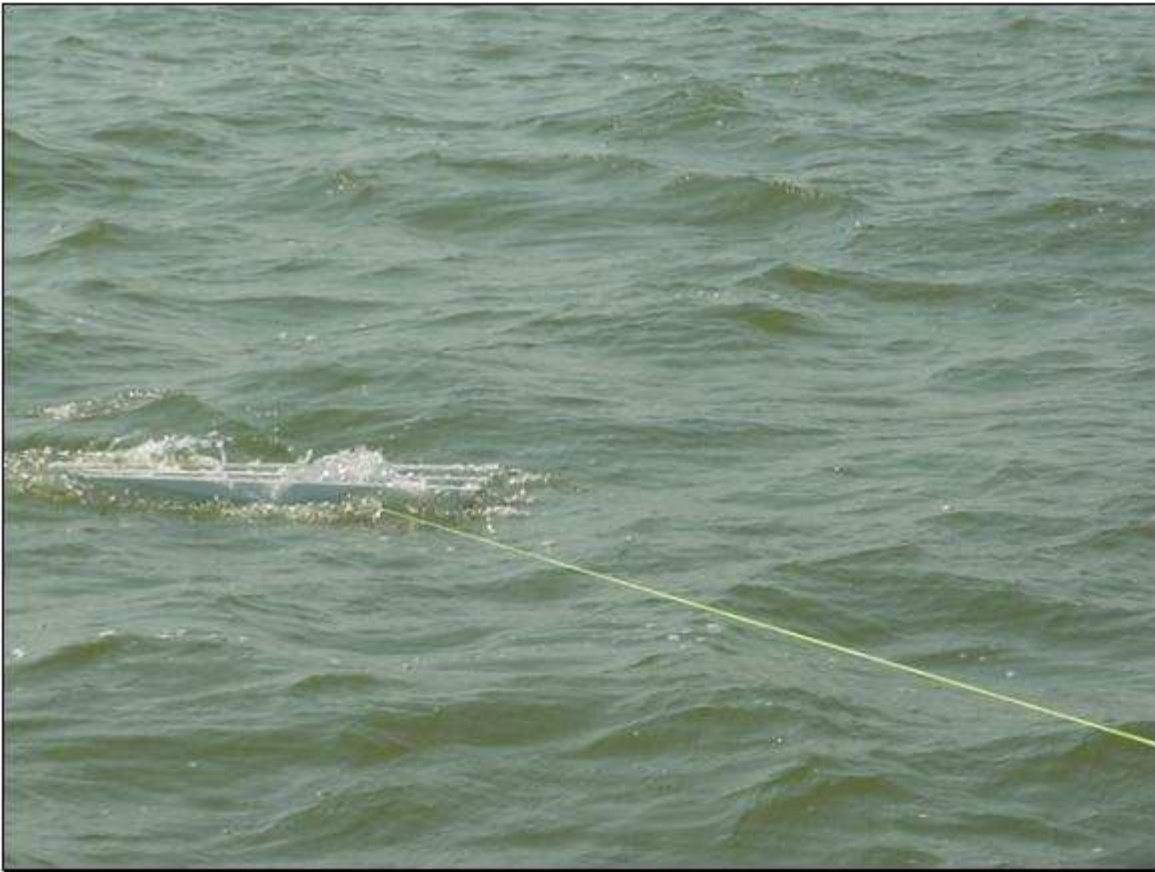
That can be where they will stay!

Custom built 6 inch 3 board set

These were light and easy to carry. They did stack nice vertically.

Small eye bolt looked like it would come lose at any time.





Running and setting slow, the boards ran way back and low in water

At 60-75 feet out almost sunk and way back



Found that if I sped up to about 3 knots, boards started to work better

Setting out 1 Umbrella, caused the boards to sink further and run back.



In slight chop at 100ft – with 1 umbrella the board starts to disappear.



These boards were hard to pull in unless I came to a stop in the water.

This was probably because they were so far down in the water.

These may be ok for small 1 or 2 rigs and maybe only 50 to 75 feet out

Custom 10 inch – 3 boards used by Down Time Charters



Setting out boards at 100 ft, boards are at a good angle - horizontal to the boat.





Board set out with 1 umbrella in slight chop shows good angle and no tendency to flip.

I run up to 4 Umbrellas on this setup



Tips and Tricks

I use a wire reel to hold planer board line when not in use. Old open face reels work good to store line and keep from getting tangled when retrieving line.

Weed Wacker line works great for running line.

Reel is not used for retrieving running line, only for storage.

I use 75 to 125 foot on each side with boards running out to about 100-125 foot with bow in line. Planer line **MUST** run to top or highest point on boat and out to Planer



Connecting reel line to running line is easy with a Scotty Clip setup.



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